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Remarks

This reply is in response to the Official Action mailed December 31, 2002. In that Official Action, the Examiner reiterated his rejection of applicants' claims 1-19. Specifically, the Examiner maintains that claims 1, 2, 7-10, 13 and 14 are anticipated under 35 USC § 102(e). The Examiner cited Balachandran et al. (US 5,881,105) as the basis for this rejection. The Examiner also rejected applicants' claims 3-4 and 15-19 as obvious under 35 USC § 103(a). The Examiner cited Balachandran et al. in view of Le Strat et al. (US 6,134,220) as the basis for the rejection.

Independent claims 1, 3, 9 and 11 have been amended to emphasise the important feature of the present invention: that a word of signaling information is inserted not only into the individual frames to which it is related, but also, having been partitioned, into frames *other than* those individual frames to which it is related. This feature of the invention is illustrated in FIG. 2 and is described at page 6, lines 9 to 16 of the applicants' specification. Referring to frame 3 of FIG. 2, the code word, 010, corresponding to mode 3, is inserted into frame 3. In addition, individual bits of this code word are also transmitted in frames 0, 1 and 2. The third column of the table of FIG. 2 shows the least significant bit of the code word 010 being transmitted in frame number 0; the second bit is transmitted in frame number 1 and the most significant bit is transmitted in frame number 2. Thus, the code word 010 is transmitted in two ways. This aspect of the invention allows error checking of the received code word by comparison with a code word determined from three previous frames. See Fig. 2 and page 7, lines 6 to 7 of applicants' specification. As noted at page 3, lines 3 to 7 of applicants' specification, transmitting the code word in this way provides the advantages of highly protected and highly reliable signaling requiring a minimum number of bits, and easy detection of the signaling bits.

Applicants submit that neither Balachandran et al. nor Le Strat et al., nor a combination of the teachings of the two documents, suggests a transmission of signaling information in this way. As the Examiner notes in point 4.1 of the Official Action, Balachandran et al. teaches the step of inserting signaling information *related to* individual frames into the individual frames (column 3, lines 45 to 47). Balachandran et al. also describes interleaving control signals in the FACCH (column 4, lines 3 to 11). However, Balachandran et al. does not suggest that the same signaling information should be inserted into both: 1) the frames to which it relates; and 2) into other frames. As previously noted, applicants' claims require that the signaling information is inserted into the frames to which it relates *and* other frames. In fact, quite contrary to applicants' invention, Balachandran et al. describes, at column 3, lines 45 to 47, the insertion of synchronizing bits into a transmission burst and, at column 4, lines 3 to 11, describes the

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interleaving of control signals in the FACCH (but there is no suggestion that these control signals include the synchronising bits). Thus, Balachandran et al. describes inserting signaling information into the frames to which the information relates and partitioning and inserting other, different signaling information. There is no suggestion in Balachandran et al. that the two steps should be carried out with respect to the same signaling information (as required by applicants' claims). It is therefore submitted that claim 1 and corresponding system claim 9 of the present application are novel and inventive over Balachandran et al.

The Examiner cites Balachandran et al. and Le Strat et al. against new independent claim 3. Claim 3 further recites that the signaling information indicates a coding mode. Le Strat describes a coding mode sent through the FACCH. However, as in Balachandran et al., there is no suggestion in Le Strat et al. that the coding mode, or indeed any signaling information, should be transmitted in the two ways specified in the present claims 1 and 3 (i.e. both in the frames to which the information relates and partitioned and inserted into other, unrelated frames).

For the foregoing reasons, applicants submit that their claims are in condition for allowance. Favorable action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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